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SUBJECT: GOMA NOTES - SUMBEIWO'S MEETING WITH NKUNDA

REF: KINSHASA 1095

¶1. (SBU) Retired Kenyan General Sumbeiwo, in his capacity as chief mediator for SGSE Obasanjo's peace efforts in the eastern DRC, met with CNDP Chairman Laurent Nkunda and approximately 15 members of his North Kivu administration on December 11 in the context of the negotiations that were being held in Nairobi. According to a MONUC source who attended the meeting, Sumbeiwo stressed that the Nairobi talks had made little progress because of unresolved procedural issues. Nkunda dominated the meeting, insisting that the political problems in question were national in nature, and not confined to North Kivu. Sumbeiwo reportedly urged Nkunda to enter his reservations on the agenda for future talks, but to sign the document presented in Nairobi so that the process could continue.

¶2. (SBU) Nkunda reportedly agreed to allow his negotiators to sign the document in question, saying that he trusted Obasanjo and Sumbeiwo as "African leaders," but had little trust in the broader international community. (Note: It is unclear to which document the MONUC source is referring. The readout we previously received and reported reftel stated that no agreement had been reached regarding the documents presented in Nairobi. End note)

¶3. (SBU) EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Louis Michel also joined the meeting with Nkunda, reportedly at the invitation of Obasanjo. According to a EU diplomat in Goma, Michel delivered a message to Nkunda from Rwandan President Kagame informing Nkunda that the Nairobi discussions should focus only on North Kivu issues, and not on broader national concerns (such as changing the government or constitution). Louis Michel arrived late to the meeting, but then drove with Nkunda back to Rutshuru, where he was deposited just outside the MONUC base.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: MONUC is impressed with the Sumbeiwo/Mkapa team. Sumbeiwo knows how to keep negotiations moving forward, while Mkapa can be brought in to placate intransigent or offended leaders. MONUC believes that Louis Michel, however, is acting outside his humanitarian mandate, and adding an unneeded and unwanted new negotiating track. His arrival at the gates of MONUC in Nkunda's car, in full view of the international press, was an unnecessary affront to MONUC because it demonstrated Nkunda's determination and ability to assert his authority in MONUC territory. End comment

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